

Maryland Foster Youth Resource Center, which provides a variety of supportive resources for both youth in foster care and alumni of the foster care system.

I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the many accomplishments of Jim McComb and in wishing him success in his future endeavors.●

#### CONGRATULATING THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

● Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Battery D of the 216th Air Defense Artillery on receiving the U.S. Army's Valorous Unit Award for extraordinary heroism against an armed enemy while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

This is the second highest unit decoration in the Army and a proud achievement. Our State and our country are grateful to have these brave men and women serving in the Minnesota National Guard.

America's National Guard and Reserve Forces are playing an increasingly important role in today's military, and time and again the Minnesota National Guard has answered the call of duty. Delta Battery answered the call by serving in Iraq during a time of great need, and their actions helped make the formation of an Iraqi government possible. It is stories like theirs that have made the Minnesota National Guard such a well-known and well-respected organization at the highest levels of our Nation's military and Government.

As Minnesota's Senator, I will continue to do my part to make sure that our Government serves our men and women in uniform as well as they have served our country. This includes doing more to make sure that members of the Guard and Reserve Forces who have been called to Active Duty are not treated any differently than their Active Duty counterparts when they return home. There wasn't a waiting line when our National Guard troops signed up to serve, and there shouldn't be a waiting line when they need access to the services and support they have earned through their service.

Every day I feel honored to represent the members of the Minnesota National Guard in the Senate. We owe our thanks to Adjutant General Larry Shellito for his steady leadership and to our troops for what they do every day. It does not go unnoticed.●

#### CONGRATULATING THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD

● Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery Regiment on receiving the U.S. Army's Meritorious Unit Commendation for exceptionally meritorious conduct while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I join the U.S. Army in recognizing this unit for their out-

standing devotion and superior performance in military operations against an armed enemy.

Our State and our country are grateful to have these brave men and women serving in the Minnesota National Guard.

America's National Guard and Reserve Forces are playing an increasingly important role in today's military, and time and again the Minnesota National Guard has answered the call of duty. The 1-125th Regiment answered the call by serving in Iraq during a time of great need, and their actions helped reduce violence in that country. It is stories such as theirs that have made the Minnesota National Guard such a well-known and well-respected organization at the highest levels of our Nation's military and Government.

As Minnesota's Senator, I will continue to do my part to make sure that our Government serves our men and women in uniform as well as they have served our country. This includes doing more to make sure that members of the Guard and Reserve Forces who have been called to Active Duty are not treated any differently than their Active-duty counterparts when they return home. There wasn't a waiting line when our National Guard troops signed up to serve, and there shouldn't be a waiting line when they need access to the services and support they have earned through their service.

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#### REMEMBERING RAMÓN M. BARQUÍN

● Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to honor an individual who lived in pursuit of a free Cuba and a better America—Colonel Ramón M. Barquín, who died at the age of 93 on March 3, 2008. Colonel Barquín was an accomplished military leader, an educator, a diplomat, and an entrepreneur. Although Cuba was his native home, he made our Nation a better place during the years he lived in exile.

Ramón was born in Cienfuegos, Cuba, on May 12, 1914. At the age of 19, he joined the Cuban Army, served his country, and graduated from the Cuban Military Academy in 1941. During his years of military service, Colonel Barquín attended the U.S. Strategic Intelligence School here in the U.S. Following a distinguished career in the military, Colonel Barquín found his passion in teaching. In the classroom, he worked to instill a culture of civic awareness within the military's ranks and eventually was promoted as director of Cuba's military schools.

Following his career in Cuban military education, Barquín was selected to serve as Chief of Intelligence of the

Cuban Army. As an attaché to the United States, Colonel Barquín was honored in 1955 with the Legion of Merit for his military acumen. While serving as an attaché, he learned of the shifting political winds in Cuba and conspired to prevent freedom from losing its foothold in his native home. I can remember as a young boy living through tumultuous times, my father often remarking that in Colonel Barquín, Cuba had the best hope for democracy. His concerns led him to participate in a failed military revolt against the Batista dictatorship and actively work against Castro's totalitarian regime. When Castro came to power, he asked Barquín to serve in the regime's army. Knowing the regime's repressive nature, Colonel Barquín instead chose to serve in an ambassadorial post in Europe, where he was able to flee to the United States to live in exile.

After briefly living in Miami, Barquín rekindled his passion for education by establishing a consortium of schools in Puerto Rico. The consortium consists of several educational institutions, including a K-12 military school, summer camps and an institute for civic education now known as Instituto de Formacion Democratica. He was recognized for his hard work and entrepreneurship by the Puerto Rican government as the 1995 Educator of the Year.

Graduates of the K-12 academy he founded had kind words of appreciation for the Colonel's work and character. According to one student, "with the Colonel, I learned to love my country and he taught me the values that lead my life today."

As a Cuban-American, a Floridian, and a U.S. Senator, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to an individual with a legacy as awe-inspiring as that of Colonel Ramón M. Barquín. His unwavering commitment to freedom and democracy, his generosity, and his zeal for serving others is sorely missed.●

#### SOUTH DAKOTA HONOR FLIGHT

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize a group of 122 South Dakota World War II veterans who traveled to Washington, DC, on May 1 and 2 to visit the World War II Memorial. This trip was made possible by the Honor Flight Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing World War II veterans to Washington, DC, to visit the World War II Memorial at no cost to the veterans.

South Dakota's veterans have played an important role in making our Nation great. Through their sacrifices, America has triumphed, remained a free and vibrant nation, and helped others obtain their own freedom. I was honored to welcome these American heroes to our Nation's Capital to see the symbols of the freedoms they have protected around the world. I am humbled by their sacrifice and appreciated the opportunity to meet with them and